

The Crucible, Act II by Arthur Miller
Reading Warm-up A

Read the following passage. Pay special attention to the underlined words. Then, read it again, and complete the activities. Use a separate sheet of paper for your written answers.

Before Casey won the tennis match, she had no idea that winning something could create so much distress. Her opponent, Belinda, had accused her of calling her serves out when they were in, a level of deceit that Casey would never have stooped to. By now everyone at tennis camp had heard the rumor that Casey was a cheater, a calamity for her reputation as an honest player. Everywhere she went, people greeted her with sneers, called her “The Champ” in voices full of sarcasm.

“You’re a better player than everyone here,” said her friend Amy, hoping to comfort her. “Belinda is just resentful because she knows she can’t beat you fairly.”

Casey just shut herself up in her room, though, indignant over how unfairly she was being treated. She also knew that Belinda was right: She was the best player, certainly much better than Belinda.

She wished she could think of some way to prove her innocence, but the matches had no referees, no magistrate to appeal to for the right decision. The players would always call their own matches, based on the honor system, and when it came to being honest, Casey would never falter. After all, what would be the point of cheating, when the goal of tennis camp was to improve as a player? Though fiercely competitive, Casey had always tried to compensate by giving her opponents the benefit of the doubt on any close call.

The answer came to her that night as she lay awake in bed: She would challenge Belinda to a rematch. In fact, she would give Belinda a five-point advantage into the match. Whether she won or lost, she would at least clear her name, though she had a feeling she would win.

1. Underline the words in this and the previous sentence that give a clue to the meaning of deceit. Use the word **deceit** in an original sentence.
2. Circle the words in this sentence that give a clue to the meaning of calamity. Is a **calamity** greater or smaller than a setback?
3. Underline the words that give a clue to the meaning of sarcasm. How would a remark full of **sarcasm** sound?
4. Circle the words that offer a clue to the meaning of resentful here. What are two antonyms for the word **resentful**?
5. Underline the words in this sentence that hint at the meaning of indignant. What are two synonyms for **indignant**?
6. Circle the words in this sentence that offer clues to the meaning of magistrates.
7. Underline the words in this and the next sentence that give a clue to the meaning of falter. What are two synonyms for **falter**?
8. Circle the words in this sentence that give a clue to the meaning of compensate. Use the word **compensate** in an original sentence.